

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior listings, and all prior versions, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid through iodination of 2-methylbenzoic acid, characterized in that the process comprises, as essential steps, a reaction step of iodinating 2-methylbenzoic acid in the presence of a H- β -form zeolite, wherein the H- β -form zeolite has an Si/Al mole ratio of 10 to 250, iodine, at least one of iodic acid and periodic acid, acetic anhydride and acetic acid, and a purification step including sublimation, distillation, crystallization, or a combination of two or more of these.

2. - 3. (Cancelled).

4. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 1, wherein the H- β -form zeolite contains an element other than Si, Al, and O, which form a skeleton thereof, within or outside the skeleton.

5. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 4, wherein the element other than Si, Al, and O, which form a skeleton of the H- β -form zeolite, is at least one member selected from among Na, K, Cs, Ca, Mg, Ti, Sn, Fe, Ni, Zn, Pb, and Ag.

6. (Cancelled).

7. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 1, wherein the H- β -form zeolite is separated and recovered from a reaction mixture resulting from the reaction step, followed by re-employment in the reaction step.

8. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 7, wherein the separated and recovered H- β -form zeolite is calcined, followed by re-employment in the reaction step.

9. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 8, wherein the separated and recovered H- β -form zeolite is washed with a solvent, followed by calcining.

10. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 9, wherein the separated and recovered H- β -form zeolite is washed with acetic acid serving as the solvent.

11. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 8, wherein the separated and recovered H- β -form zeolite is calcined at 400 to 700°C.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Original) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 1, wherein the purification step is crystallization in which a product is precipitated through cooling or addition of water.

14. (Original) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 13, wherein the product is precipitated by adding 0.1 to 5 parts by weight of water to 1 part by weight of formed reaction mixture.

15. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 13, wherein the formed reaction mixture is subjected to crystallization at 10 to 80°C for purification.

16. (Original) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 13, wherein, after crystallization, the solvent is removed from a mother liquor, and a portion of the residue obtained after removal of the solvent is recycled in a crystallization system.

17. (Cancelled).

18. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 9, wherein the separated and recovered H- β -form zeolite is calcined at 400 to 700°C.

19. (Previously presented) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 14, wherein the formed reaction mixture is subjected to crystallization at 10 to 80°C for purification.

20. (Cancelled).

21. (New) A process for producing 5-iodo-2-methylbenzoic acid as described in claim 1, wherein said acetic anhydride is employed as a dehydrating agent for water generated in the reaction step.